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A REVISED MILITARY STRATEGY  
FOR CHANGING REALITIES AND CONDITIONS

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### In Brief

The 1990s promise to be a decade of intense debate on the balance of political, economic, and military power within the United States. Although it is clear less will be spent on military power, the primary missions assigned to the military by Congress and the President remain unchanged: defend the homeland, secure U.S. interests worldwide, and protect the United States internal security. While the core objectives of U.S. Military Strategy remain viable, supporting elements require restructuring. Revised elements of the strategy call for reduced reliance on forward-deployed forces, increased capabilities to project power worldwide, smaller nuclear forces, reinvigorated reserves, improved intelligence, and strengthened alliances.

### Background

For over forty years U.S. military strategy has been built on the foundation of global war with the Soviet Union. With the Soviet threat receding and the shape of other threats yet to emerge, it will be impossible to maintain 28 active and reserve Army divisions, four Marine divisions, 14 Navy carrier battle groups, and 37 Airforce active and reserve wings.

Do global change and fiscal realities require an evolution of U.S. military strategy? Or, will strategy that has buoyed triumphant American values and interests remain valid while the

degree of execution varies according to resources available? To fundamentally alter a strategy that has served the nation so well requires a clear vision of the future. The Eastern Bloc is unravelling in such a chaotic manner no one can make a reliable assessment of the future. Long-range military planning is now being made on guesswork.

### Strategy Defined

There is frequent misunderstanding of precisely what is meant by strategy. Clausewitz, Hart, and other renowned military thinkers have all written of strategy, grand strategy, operational strategy, strategic art, and so on. In order to be clear in this paper I choose to define strategy merely as the art of making choices to achieve desired outcomes. Strategic realities are geographic, economic, military, political, and social conditions which create and influence choices for policy makers. National military strategy is concerned with achieving and protecting state interests and must be framed within a set of objectives.

### National Objectives

Although strategic realities are changing, U.S. interests, values, and objectives are not. The following non-controversial objectives were presented in 1988 by the Commission on Integrated

Long-Term Strategy and are presented as the baseline for understanding what a military strategy is designed to accomplish:

- \* The survival of the United States as a free and independent nation, with its fundamental values intact and its institutions and people secure
- \* A healthy and growing U.S. economy to provide opportunity for individual prosperity and to use as a resource base for national endeavors
- \* A stable and secure world, free of major threats to U.S. interests
- \* The growth of human freedom, democratic institutions, and free market economies throughout the world, linked by a fair and open international trading system
- \* Healthy and vigorous alliance relationships.

#### Military Strategy Objectives

As our values and interests remain stable, so do the basic objectives of U.S. military strategy: to deter war, to control

escalation in wars that do start, and to terminate wars on terms favorable to the United States. And, in this decade, a new objective emerges: to blunt non-traditional national security threats -- when they arise -- such as providing a visible demonstration of national resolve in stemming the flow of illegal drugs into the United States.

#### Elements of the Strategy

The basic tenets of U.S. military strategy face changing strategic conditions that will alter the execution of the strategy. As set forth in various U.S. Military Posture Statements, America's military strategy has included the following basic elements: nuclear deterrence; strong alliances; forward deployed forces; a strong central reserve; force mobility; freedom of the seas, air, and space; effective command and control; and timely and accurate intelligence.

These elements have been the foundation of this nation's military strategy for over four decades. Changing strategic conditions will require the United States to modify certain elements of the strategy, particularly forward deployed forces. Americans stationed in Europe face increasing pressure from all sides for early withdrawal in response to a decreasing Soviet threat and a decreased U.S. defense budget. Significant cuts are also likely for personnel garrisoned in the Pacific Theater. The

armed forces face significant reductions from a Congress unwilling to sustain a defense budget in which 50 per cent is devoted to supporting nearly a half million personnel in Europe and the Far East.

New Elements for Changing Strategic Conditions

Given a decreasing worldwide Soviet threat and diminishing resources, forward-deployment of large U.S. Forces can no longer anchor military strategy. A solution to reduced presence overseas requires the development of a credible power-projection element placing primary reliance on projecting military power from the United States and from those few remaining overseas bases.

Elimination or modification of forward-deployed forces will also alter other elements of U.S. strategy. Smaller, modernized nuclear forces remain critical to retaining a viable deterrent to any and all nuclear threats. Power-projection requires the reshaping of existing forces into forces capable of deploying anywhere in the world - on short notice.

The U.S. Army must downsize, yet continue to do what it does best: deter major war, and when committed, soundly defeat the enemy's land forces and eliminate all will to resist. Employment of the army should be seen as a demonstration of America's will to enter the fight for the duration.

The U.S. Navy has traditionally performed the task of projecting power overseas. During the cold war, the Navy developed the Maritime Strategy in support of the European land war scenario. As that threat loses credibility, the Navy should reduce its overseas commitments, shift part of the fleet to the reserves, and get involved in sealift to support not only power projection but also deployment of America's reserve forces.

Intelligence must be collected, analyzed, and produced that provides both early warning and usable tactical intelligence for rapidly deploying U.S. Forces. And, alliances must be sustained and developed regionally - recognizing that America cannot and should not go it alone when many nations are very capable of defending themselves and their neighbors.

Nuclear Deterrence: Arms control and reduced budgets mean a smaller strategic U.S. Force. This will require a shift away from our large, expensive triad concept. A combination of submarines, air-launched cruise missiles, and a single silo based land system would build a strategic force capable of sustaining deterrence. Research should continue on strategic defense systems searching for a defensive system capable of repelling several warheads from an accidentally launched Soviet missile or a few missiles coming from a Third World country.

Conventional Forces: Conventional forces must maintain a capability across the spectrum of conflict. With the reduced likelihood of a major U.S. - Soviet war, regional conflicts of lower intensity loom as the most likely threat to U.S. security interests. These requirements should be met with a mix of light and heavy capabilities from the active force. If these forces cannot meet regional requirements, mobilization and commitment of additional Army units should be seen as a clear signal of America's resolve to see the conflict to a successful conclusion.

Regional and low intensity responsibilities require a blend of light and heavy forces from both the Marine and Army active force. Those forces should be trained to deploy and operate anywhere in the world on short notice. Marine light forces should be used where access is available from the sea while Army light forces deploy via strategic airlift to areas not accessible to the Marines. Heavier active units will provide immediate back-up combat power while the bulk of U.S. heavy combat power reverts to reserve status.

Bring Back the Citizen Soldier: Even though the prospect of world war is remote, it cannot be ruled out. Since America's power projection forces will be unable to win a world war alone, a surge force of great magnitude must be maintained in the reserves. The inability of present reserve forces to satisfy

current requirements means it would be futile to place additional burdens on them without fundamentally altering the reserve program.

The same changing strategic conditions that permit smaller active forces also provide a rare opportunity to explore a national service concept. The President and Congress have a window of opportunity to institute a mandatory national service program of which one component would be military service in the reserves. Not only is it potentially more cost effective, it returns the concept of citizen participation as the bedrock of national defense.

Of course this is much easier said than done. Reserve and National Guard forces must undergo sweeping change. Units will have to be disbanded, redesignated, and activated. A new reserve force should be structured regionally and, most importantly, commanded by active officers with a reserve counterpart who assumes command upon mobilization. The active duty commander will provide the vital link between the citizen soldier and the active army, providing meaningful training and ensuring readiness is sustained.

The National Guard provides unique capabilities despite confusing command lines under dual state and federal control. Originally, state militiamen were seen as pools of men that could

become armies in times of crisis. However, since 1933, National Guard units have had dual roles - state militia and federal forces. Several states contend that control of National Guard training missions is a states' right and responsibility. With the Army National Guard providing 46 percent of the Army's combat power and the Air National Guard providing 73 percent of the nation's interceptor forces it is time to put the nation's combat power in the national reserves and eliminate state interference in national foreign policy. Each state could create a police-type civil patrol for internal use in natural disaster and civil disturbance.

The bottom line in credible power projection rests with a blend of light, rapidly deployable forces backed up with the heavy hammer of a tough, ready reserve. If the job is to get in and get out - send in the Marines and Army light forces. If the job requires staying power, the mobilization of reserves may send a strong signal to the enemy that might help end the crisis before a war starts.

Intelligence: As U.S. overseas presence is reduced and reliance on mobilization increases, access to timely accurate intelligence becomes more essential. Expansion and modernization of intelligence capabilities, especially human intelligence activities, is vital for the decision making process. Successful mobilization, deployment, and execution will rely on increased

warning time and an early decision to execute. Failure to provide the National Command Authority timely, accurate information means the failure of the military strategy.

Alliances: U.S. Military Strategy has always been based on a foundation of strong alliances. In this period of challenge and change, those alliances will become increasingly important. Collective security among nations of common value must anchor America's worldwide military strategy. The United States cannot match all potential adversaries alone. Present alliance and treaties and new alliances with emerging regional friendly powers must be backed up with modern weaponry, trained personnel, and security assistance in exchange for access to facilities and terrain. Strengthened relationships enhance our capability to defend ourselves and effectively counter potential adversaries.

#### This Strategy in Retrospect

Where to begin? Constructing a strategy must begin with what is known - not the unknown conditions of the future. This strategy begins with what we already have, reduces it to account for more acceptable risk, and maintains a capability to support national objectives. The benefits of this strategy are reduced resource requirements, smaller, rapidly deployable forces, a citizen-based reserve, and strengthened alliances.

This strategy provides a baseline from which further reductions can be made as the future unfolds. It recognizes a diminishing Soviet threat and cuts defense resources where they are no longer needed. Arguing strategy on tomorrow's unknown threats is useless. This strategy merely recognizes that the U.S. can make do with smaller, flexible forces without jeopardizing national security. If this strategy has promise, and I believe it does, the U.S. will get the resource reductions it seeks, yet secure its position as a superpower.

#### Summary

A revised political-military strategy is needed to sustain the momentum developed over the last forty years. While the objectives of the strategy remain virtually unchanged, several basic elements must be restructured to address changing strategic realities. Adoption of power-projection over forward deployment will require U.S. decision makers to approach future regional crises more selectively and with a keen understanding of America's vital interests. Hard decisions will determine which crises pose direct risks to national security and which do not, and which can be handled through our alliances or by other means.

Changing geographic, economic, military, political, and social realities are creating difficult choices for U.S. policy makers. These choices involve both forces and means and entail a

reordering of priorities to sustain a military strategy capable of ensuring national security. Whether or not we emerge from this decade with an enduring military strategy depends on what choices we make now.

**End Note**

Multiple scholastic and governmental sources provided valuable background information in preparing this essay. This paper melds my views and current corporate thinking into a revised military strategy.